

ORIGIN/ACTION

ARA-8

RM/R	REP	AF
3		

ARA	EUR	FE

NEA	CU	INR
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L	GPA	O/P/S
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AGR	COM	FRB

INT	LAB	TAR

TR	XMB	AIR
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ARMY	CIA	NAVY
3	10	4

OSD	USIA	NSA
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AIRGRAM

A-321

NO.

SECRET

DATE

FOR RM USE ONLY

TO : DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Department: Please pass to all
Central American Po's, Panama,
Mexico, and USCINCSO for POLAD

FROM : American Embassy, GUATEMALA

DATE: January 15, 1966

SUBJECT: Monthly Guerrilla Report-Dec 1-31

REF : A-275 - PR 23 GURT

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC, MR

REVIEWED BY Eaj DATE Oct 1967
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

Summary

The month of December was one of uncertainty, a continuation of coup rumors, and a strengthening of the resolve of the GOG to react more vehemently to the threat of subversion. As a result, while the month may have begun with the terrorists seemingly running rampant and unchecked in their kidnapping and terror campaign, by the new year, the GOG had at least slowed down this type of activity and perhaps had restored some confidence in it on the part of the upper sector in Guatemala. In any event, even if brought about by the Christmas season, the atmosphere settled somewhat and citizens concentrated more on parties and hang-overs than on politics and terrorists as 1965 came to a close. A complete list of alleged and confirmed extremist acts, compiled by the office of the Army Attaché, is enclosed with this airgram.

Kidnappings

Kidnappings drew the most attention during December. The month began with the release of two victims, Rafael Sabbagh and Armando Gabriel, after close to \$150,000 was paid in ransom money. Almost simultaneously, Juan José Falla Sanchez, son of Juan José Falla Arias, Rector of Rafael Landivar University, and Manuel Mario "Teddy" Herrera were kidnapped. In the first instance, the father was momentarily kidnapped also, until it was confirmed that the ransom for the son had been paid. However, some rumors circulated that the father had been taken prisoner by the judicial police in an effort to prevent the pay-off and to make him cooperate with the authorities. In any event, a total of close to \$225,000 in ransom money has been collected by kidnappers since the wave started.

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FORM 4-62 DS-323

FOR DEPT. USE ONLY

☒ In ☐ Out

Drafted by:

POL:EVNef:d1b

1/12/66

Contents and Classification Approved by:

DCM:VPVky

Clearances:

POL I:Duffan; MIL:Majorance

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Guatemala.

It was, however, the kidnapping of [redacted] that caused the most concern, and at one point it was thought that [redacted] was killed by the terrorists (presumed to be members of the ERG). [redacted] was a specialist, although not terribly successful, effort to [redacted] the kidnappers when the ransom was paid off. Allegedly learning of [redacted] the kidnappers for the payment by tapping the [redacted] [redacted] cooperated fully with the authorities. [redacted] attempted to leave the rendezvous [redacted] a blaze of gunfire. In the end, [redacted] died several days later in the [redacted] through several private properties. Soldiers, a helicopter, judicial [redacted] any other law enforcement agency, an effort to capture anyone else. [redacted] unknown reason, several presumed [redacted] through the cordon. Further [redacted] stains in the back seat), a [redacted] police car, another vehicle [redacted] air) and the terrorists all [redacted] ist killed, one presumed wounded, slightly wounded. They also [redacted] paid and arrested several more. [redacted] particularly successful operation [redacted] used, at least it gave some [redacted] nappers and was making it a [redacted] It also meant that the Herre [redacted] was released on Christmas Eve [redacted] the \$17,900 it recovered on [redacted] and therefore the GOG really [redacted]

Murders

While kidnappings captured [redacted] broad daylight in downtown Gu [redacted] the citizenry. The victim was [redacted] Peace of the village of Moral [redacted] forewarned since in his role [redacted] several captured guerrillas [redacted] He was shot on December 8 by [redacted] has/forbidden all motorcycles [redacted]

The terrorists also assassinated [redacted] 7, allegedly for having cooperated [redacted] persons, one a comisionado [redacted] both cases, the murderers escaped [redacted]

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Coup Rumors

Rumors of coups continued to build up during the month, coming to a head on December 24, when the story circulated that Chief of Government Enrique Peralta had been deposed. It appeared as if three different elements might have been engaged in similar activity: The Movimiento de Liberación Nacional (MLN) and its Presidential candidate Miguel Ponciano continued their plotting (Embtel 395), Ricardo Peralta and his clique of younger officers were rumored to be considering similar action, and stories circulated that strictly army elements, affiliated with no party or no particular person, might have been planning to oust Peralta and bring about genuinely free elections with no favoritism for an "official" candidate. However, despite the rumors, Peralta managed to remain in control, although how firmly has become a reasonable question to ask.

GOG counter-activity

While the aforementioned gun battle in zone 10 of Guatemala City was undoubtedly the most spectacular action of the month, several more subdued acts may in the long run prove more productive. The GOG finally announced that it would give \$25,000 reward each for the capture dead or alive of guerrilla leaders Luis Turcios and Marco Antonio Yon Sosa. The same reward was offered for information leading to the capture of any of the kidnapers operating in Guatemala. The GOG also requested the assistance of the USG and a public safety specialist in counter-terrorist activity came from Venezuela to give the GOG advice on how best to proceed.

The GOG then issued a communique stating that a "vast communist conspiracy" existed in Guatemala. While not a noteworthy statement, at least it did show that the fiction that the guerrillas and terrorists were mere "bandits" (as the GOG had always previously claimed) was no longer the GOG line. At more or less the same time, Col. Peralta somberly addressed the nation on radio and television in an effort to assure it the Army was unified and was pursuing the communists with proper vigor. Although it is doubtful the speech actually reassured many, it may have put a slight damper on plans for a coup.

Finally, and perhaps the most significant, the GOG named Col. Rafael Arriaga coordinator of all police counter-guerrilla activity. This unity was certainly necessary, for the police forces of the nation frequently acted at cross purposes and appeared more as rivals than as colleagues in action. Peralta also undertook to shift and transfer a number of military men in an effort to weaken any efforts at a coup, particularly shifting men who appeared more loyal to Miguel Ponciano than to him. Finally, the GOG also decreed the death penalty for kidnapping, in an effort to discourage this activity.

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A-007
Guatemala:

Arriaga

Total for Country
(Read from Right-
hand Scale)

40
30
20

Capital (2)

Eastern Region (3)

South Coast (4)

Highlands (5)

bodies found are

Santa Rosa.
per. Alta Venegas,

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Vigilante Committees

Although considerable attention was drawn to the permission given by the GOG for private citizens to form vigilante-type committees, it does not appear as if too many of these have been formed. The authority for them was never clearly defined and in fact, the only authority ever stated by the GOG was the Government Civil Code which states that citizens may do that which is not specifically prohibited. A few groups allegedly were trying to organize themselves, but they do not appear to have accomplished very much and have not been particularly effective as far as can be seen at this moment. For example, there was one effort made among Aeroclub members to organize such a group, but the stories about it have died down and it is doubtful whether it really ever got "off the ground." There were also a few other stories of vigilante groups operating in different zones of the city, but again, none have been conspicuous or have resulted in any effective counter-terrorist activity.

Ideology

It appeared as if slowly during the month, the Movimiento Revolucionario 13 de Noviembre (MR-13) and the Fuerzas Armadas Rebeldes (FAR), the two guerrilla-terrorist groups operating in Guatemala, might be cooperating more than before. There are no firm indications to this effect.

_____ and there still has been no indication that the FAR and MR-13 are actively working together and pursuing similar objectives. Undoubtedly, both want to provoke as much chaos as possible, but ideological goals such as they are still appear different. For example, a recent copy of the MR-13 publication, Revolución Socialista, went to great lengths to castigate the Soviet Union and extol the Chinese Communists. No mention was made of local ideological differences, but still the Guatemalan Communist party (Partido Guatemalteco de Trabajo - PGT) and the FAR are known to lean much more heavily upon the Soviet Union and are its recognized agents here. Likewise, the FAR has been invited to attend the January Havana conference, and the MR-13 has not. As a result, while outright feuding between the two groups appears to have disappeared at least for a while, and the two groups are perhaps cooperating in terrorist or other strikes, they still are not a unified group.

Strength of Party

_____ according to this source (reported in A-292), the PGT has about 900 active members. Another 1300 can be considered as strong sympathizers willing to work for the party, and perhaps 3,000 more can be considered somewhat passive supporters of the Party. These estimates, while reflecting a modest increase in Party size, do show that the party is not doing as well as it claims in obtaining new adherents.

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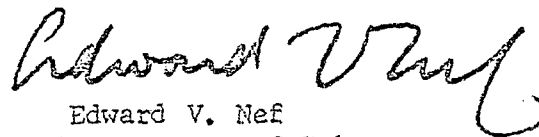
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Guatemala.

COMMENT: The storms of December have been weathered by Peralta, and his position in January appeared stronger than in the previous month. As the new year began, the serious threat of a coup had disappeared at least momentarily, and having done so, it might with good fortune not appear again with such gravity before election time. In this sense, Peralta appears to have at least successfully held his government together in the face of a serious threat.

On the terrorist side, however, the quiet at the end of the year will probably be only a lull, although there are indications that the PGT at least does not intend to fight the elections and in fact will not try to disrupt them. Hopefully the new resolve of the GOG in combatting extremist activities will make terrorism more difficult and risky and will keep it within manageable bounds.

For the Ambassador:



Edward V. Nef
Second Secretary of Embassy

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ENCLOSURE

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Guatemala.

Terrorist Acts and Guerrilla Operations

Dec 1-3 Two women captured as suspected guerrillas--Usulután
Zacapa

Early Dec Ricardo Miranda Aldana, in pick-up truck, was stopped and
arrested, presumed member of FAR. Truck had Thompson .45 machine-
gun, a rifle, box of German hand grenades and large quantities
of communist propaganda--Atlantic Highway to Zacapa

Dec 2 Juan Jose Falla Sanchez, Guatemalan lawyer kidnapped, released
Dec 8 by FAR; price \$75,000. Unrest has spread through other
businessmen, reported others have been threatened and have
paid; 15 or so have left country.--Guatemala City

Dec 8 Jose Alberto SMITH Peralta shot to death; was mayor of Morales,
Department of Izabal--Guatemala City.

Dec 8 Police raid house, confiscate propaganda of 13 Nov group; one
suspect arrested.--Guatemala City

Dec 10 Texaco storage plant attacked by suspected guerrillas; little
damage--Cuyotenango.

Dec 10 Bomb placed inside radio and left in repair shop explodes,
causing little damage--Guatemala City.

Dec 12 Manuel Maria Teddy HERRERA kidnapped, released Dec 24;
price \$70,000.--Guatemala City

Dec 19 A police car shot at in Zone 9 by 2 men on motor bike.--
Guatemala City.

Dec 19 Military and police raid house, kill one kidnapper; five
vehicles confiscated along with \$20,000, one M. G. and one
pistol.--Guatemala City

Dec 24 Three men take over radio station and force operator to transmit
propaganda recorded on tape; however, message is not broadcast
over air.--Guatemala City

Dec 27 Twelve persons, suspected guerrilla sympathizers, arrested by
military police--Area of Zacapa

Dec 28 Attempt to kidnap Alfredo CASTILLO Lara.--Guatemala City

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ENCLOSURE

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Guatemala.

Terrorist Acts and Guerrilla Operations (Continued)

Dec 29 Small bomb exploded in garden of Mexican Embassy; little
 damage was caused--Guatemala City

Dec 30 Two men shot (one a military commissioner, Mr. Angel PALMA
 Lopez) on bus; reason unknown.--Near La Gomera, Escuintla

Dec 30 Bomb exploded at base of electric tower, causing power failure
 in parts of Guatemala City for 20 minutes.--Palin

Compiled by the office of the Army Attaché.

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